

# Seals 'Fly' Into Second Place

By SPENCE CONLEY  
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Thanks to Billy Hicke, the colorful little scrapper, and the Philadelphia Flyers, and considerable unexpected help from the National Hockey League's East Division, the Oakland Seals have a hunk of second place in the West Division.

Hicke's blind 18-foot third period backhand at a net he admitted he didn't see, and his big assist on the club's fastest first goal in history, gave the Seals a 2-1 win over the Flyers last night in the Cow Palace.

The win was the first in three tries in the Cow Palace. It boosted them into a second-place tie with idle Los Angeles at 25 points each, and kept alive their season-long jinx over the Flyers.

In four games with the Philadelphians, the Seals have three wins and a tie and seven big points in the standings.

The win was played before only 1,829, smallest audience in the Seals' three Cow Palace appearances this season.

Although Hicke's play was a big factor in the Seals' scoreboard success, credit defensively must go to the Oakland penalty killers, defenseman Doug Roberts, and muddering goalie Gary Smith.

The penalty killers — Ted Hampson, Gerry Ehman, George Swarbrick, Bryan Watson and Gerry Odrowski — did a great job, especially



FLYER GOALIE DOUG FAVELL DIVES TO BLOCK A SHOT (ARROW) BY SEALS' GARY JARRETT (12)

Tribune photo by Ken Klotzner

in the second period when the Seals were faced with a five-minute Flyer power play after Watson was cited for an injury-causing, high-sticking infraction.

Smitty, who arrived for duty in a dark double-breasted suit, pink shirt, huge mod watch, and six-buckle boots, proved he can be just as flashy in the nets. He made some great stops among the

18 fired by the Flyers.

The quick goals, Gary Jarrett's 12th marker of the season, came just 29 seconds into the game and on the Seals' first shot at goalie Doug Favell.

Center Mike Laughton fed Hicke breaking in, and Hicke pulled up short to drive a hard 25-footer at the net, it nearly hit Jarrett in the face, but he gloved it down and the

puck was deflected into the goal.

Brit Selby's deflection of defenseman Larry Hale's 50-foot backhander tied the game in the second period at 2:24.

But Hicke, who was busy all night around the Flyer net, finally got the game-winner when "I got a great pass from Mike (Laughton) and broke it. I didn't really see the net, but got off a real good backhand

into the far corner."

Meanwhile, the East's New York Rangers knocked off Minnesota, 4-2 last night and kept the North Stars from gaining ground.

But it's been like that all season for the Seals. The East's stronger clubs have beaten the West in situations which have benefitted the Seals.

The Seals leave Tuesday on

a holiday trip east to play five games from Christmas to New Year's Day.

First period—1, Oakland, Jarrett 13 (Hicke, Laughton) 0:20. Penalties—Philadelphia bench served by Hicke, 12:30; Watson, Oakland, 13:07.  
Second period—1, Philadelphia, Selby 4 (Hale, Johnson) 0:34. Penalties—Kennedy, Philadelphia, 0:37; Watson, Oakland, 12:25; Selby, Philadelphia, 18:57.  
Third period—1, Oakland, Hicke 18 (Laughton, Vedralis) 0:29. Penalties—Van Impe, Philadelphia, 7:11; Van Impe, Philadelphia, 13:24; Swarbrick, Oakland, 18:47.  
Shots on goal by:  
Philadelphia ..... 7 6 5 18  
Oakland ..... 9 11 11 33  
Games—Philadelphia, Favell, Oakland, Smith, 4-1,229.